

Introduction of HB596 - Hate Crimes Prevention Act



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**Representative Nasif Majeed
District 99 - Mecklenburg County**



**Introduction of House Bill 596
[Hate Crimes Prevention Act]**

Peace. On Tuesday, community leaders along with other House Democrats, joined me to hold a press conference as we introduced [House Bill 596, Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#). Hate crimes are on the rise nationwide and according to the latest FBI data, North Carolina has reported a dramatic increase in hate crimes and hate group activity.

Nationally, we have witnessed Churches, Mosques, Synagogues, and Temples desecrated. We have witnessed mass killings in the Jewish, African American, Muslim, LGBTQ communities, and acts of hatred against our Asian American community.

As legislators, we should not only be alarmed but we should stand in unity for the safety of all North Carolinians regardless of race, ethnicity, color, religion, nationality or sexual orientation.

North Carolina currently has laws addressing some hate crimes, but these laws have holes and need strengthening. [HB 596](#), if passed, would create a comprehensive "The Hate Crimes Prevention Act" in state law.

First, current laws would be expanded to include punishments for crimes committed for reasons of "ethnicity" and "gender, disability, or sexual orientation." This would make it clear that crimes motivated for these reasons would be classified as "hate crimes."

Second, the bill would direct the State Bureau of Investigation to create a Hate Crimes Statistics Database. Having a central database tracking the location, type, and quantity of hate crimes will help policy makers come up with solutions to prevent hate crimes from occurring.

Third, the bill invests in training for law enforcement and prosecutors to help these professionals identify when a crime that has occurred is a "hate crime" and help them better investigate and prosecute these crimes.

Look at [HB 596](#) and see how we propose to combat the perpetrators of hate crimes.



Left to right: Mr. Edwin Binanay (President, Asian American and Pacific Islanders Organizations); Rabbi Eric Solomon (Senior Rabbi, Beth Meyer Synagogue); Imam Oliver Muhammad (Resident Imam, As Salaam Islamic Center of Raleigh); Rep. Nasif Majeed (Primary Sponsor); Rep. Allen Buansi (Primary Sponsor); Rep. Maria Cervania (Primary Sponsor); and Rep. Caleb Rudow (Primary Sponsor).

IN OTHER NEWS

Black Maternal Health Bill Promoted

Last week was Black Maternal Health Week nationwide and this week at the NC General Assembly many advocates gathered on Wednesday for an Advocacy Day to talk about the state of Black maternal health in our state and how we need to pass bills like [HB 552](#) "2023 MOMnibus Act."

The state of infant and maternal health in North Carolina is bad and getting worse. We have the 8th highest rate of maternal mortality in the country. The March of Dimes dropped us from a "D" grade ranking last year to a "D-" grade ranking this year.

If passed into law, the Momnibus Act would do three things. First, it invests in recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse workforce of lactation consultants. Second, the bill puts into law what rights all perinatal patients have and creates an implicit bias training program for perinatal care health care professionals. Finally, the bill creates a competitive grant program to establish or expand programs for the prevention of maternal mortality among black women.

Environmental Justice Bill Filed

This week a number of House Democrats filed [HB 689](#), a bill titled "Environmental Justice in North Carolina." The bill would help our state continue its progress on protecting both our environment and the people who call North Carolina home. That work starts at the state level, and the bill would ensure that state agencies work to take into consideration the environmental impact of decisions made. To that end, it would create an Environmental Justice Advisory Council to provide independent advice and recommendations to the state. It would also create an Interagency Environmental Justice Committee to coordinate between state agencies on these efforts.

The bill also states a number of findings, among them that people of color and individuals with low income are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards, that federal laws and our state constitution guarantee equal rights, and that a lack of clear policy in the realm of environmental justice is leading to worse outcomes for many North Carolinians.

Controversial School Discipline Bill Passes NC House

[HB 188](#) passed the NC House this week on a largely, but not entirely, party-line vote. The bill now goes to the NC Senate for its consideration.

The bill requires local public schools to use best practices when developing and enforcing school discipline policies to avoid discriminating against students, but it also removes language from current law that makes it clear more minor disciplinary violations do not rise to the level of requiring a long-term suspension of the student. Proponents of the bill pointed to the need to crack down on school discipline problems. Opponents of the bill objected to the removal of language that provides clear guidance to local schools on what should not rise to the level of a suspension.

A Department of Public Instruction report issued earlier this year found that African-American students are far more likely to face short-term or long-term school suspensions. That same report showed increasing reports of school crime and violence compared with the last "normal" year before the pandemic.

The debate and data clearly show a need for higher investment in our public schools, particularly investment in mental health resources such as school nurses, counselors, or psychologists. HB 188 does not include any additional resources for local public schools.

Bill Targeting Transgender Youth Passes NC House

This week the North Carolina House of Representatives passed [HB 574](#) titled "Fairness in Women's Sports Act." This bill follows a national trend of targeting some of the most vulnerable people in our society: LGBTQ youth. The bill would also continue a trend of North Carolina wading into culture wars, like HB2, that gives our state a bad reputation. Conservative governors in other states have vetoed similar legislation because it represents government overreach into extremely personal matters that should be left to parents, schools and medical professionals.

What the bill does is issue a statewide ban on transgender girls and women participating in female sports from elementary school through college. This would replace the current system for high school sports which the NC High School Athletic Association administers. If this bill had been law last year, it would have impacted one transgender high school athlete in the entire state who would have been barred from participating.

The bill is being brought forward in the midst of a mental health crisis for teens, particularly LGBTQ teens. Its passage threatens to further marginalize and stigmatize transgender youth who are already among our most at-risk and vulnerable children.

At the same time as the NC House rushed passage of HB 574, the NC Senate passed its own version but in a separate bill - [SB 631](#). It is highly unusual for both the State Senate and the State House to pass separate bills that basically have the same wording at the same time on the same day. This type of orchestrated timing strongly suggests the bills are about politics more than anything.

Governor Cooper Proclaims National Volunteer Week, Celebrates Volunteers Across North Carolina

Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed this week, April 16 – 22, 2023, as National Volunteer Week in North Carolina to recognize the important work volunteers do in communities across the state and encourage more North Carolinians to find volunteer opportunities.

[VolunteerNC](#), an agency within the Office of the Governor, promotes volunteer opportunities and community service across North Carolina. They provide information about onsite, virtual and outdoor volunteer opportunities statewide. Volunteer needs vary by community, and range from working at a local food bank to working in North Carolina public schools.

Since 2021 more than 2.8 million North Carolina volunteers contributed over 265 million hours of service and more than 30% of North Carolinians participated in local groups or organizations and over 50% of North Carolinians donated \$25 or more to charities.

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 by presidential proclamation to promote the benefit of community service in communities nationwide.

Visit [VolunteerNC's](#) website to learn more about volunteer opportunities in North Carolina.

ARTS Day 2023



Advocates for the arts and culture sector in Mecklenburg County attended ARTS Day 2023 here at the General Assembly. They shared information about the economic, educational, and civic impact of the arts.

ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE EARLY LEARNING



Childcare is vital to our economy and communities. I met with childcare employees from Charlotte, this week. They were advocating for better pay and benefits for childcare workers and teachers, affordable and accessible child care for all children and families, and sustainable funding for childcare providers.

I support universal pre-care and Smart Start. Our children deserve high-quality learning which lays the foundation for success in school and life.

Have a great weekend. PEACE!

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